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## Why Didn’t God Make the Bible Easy to Understand? (Part I)

**Isaiah 55:8-9:** (NASB) <sup>8</sup>*For My thoughts are not your thoughts, nor are your ways My ways, declares the LORD. <sup>9</sup>For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways and My thoughts than your thoughts.*



Pick up a book or an article and start reading. If that book or article is well written, it will bring you to some kind of conclusion, some kind of understanding or realization that you did not have before. These realizations can be across a wide scope of subjects and learning, but the bottom line is you picked up that well-written book or article and now you have some greater knowledge or insight. Now pick up the Bible and start reading. It starts out all good and wonderful, and then just six chapters later it seems like God gets mad and pretty much scraps His whole creation thing. Why? Read further and the confusion grows! What is up with this anyway? The Almighty God, Creator of all things, surely could have had the Bible written in such a way that it would be universally understood! Well the fact is, He did not! Why not? There is actually a really cool answer to this!

**Why the Bible is confusing:** It was written over 1,600 years ago and by about 40 different people.

**What we feel like we want:** Clarity of purpose and content from beginning to end - no style or interpretive issues, just a straightforward summation of important events and teachings.

**Why God arranged it to be this way:** This is a book that unfolded the past (as Moses reported in Genesis) reported the present (as writers recorded Jewish and Christian history as it was happening) and prophesied the future (as the many prophets wrote what would come to happen). This approach verifies the Bible’s authenticity.

**Why the Bible is confusing:** It seems impossible to follow along with the time it takes for things to happen and the way they happen, to be able to see God’s will.

**What we feel like we want:** To know what God’s will is and when and how it is to happen.

**Why God arranged it to be this way:** His plan and its timing of it, is comprehensive, eternal and precise. The foggy view of His timing that we have verifies His power and foresight.

The fact that we cannot understand it but it comes to pass anyway verifies the power of God and our own smallness.

**Example: A somewhat obscure prophecy of a very specific event - time and timing are important:** Zechariah 9:9 Jesus unmistakably fulfilled this prophecy exactly on time and showed that it HAD to come to pass: Luke 19:37-40: Hundreds of years earlier, the prophecy predicted the people would shout in triumph, lauding Jesus as their king. If no one fulfilled it, God would have seen to it that its fulfillment would have been accomplished in some way. *The stones will cry out!* Jesus was saying, “God said it would happen this way and there is nothing I can do to change it.”

**Time and timing are precise and important features in the revealing of God’s plan! What about these?** 2 Peter 3:9: Sounds like this would be worth waiting for! Ezekiel 33:11: God lectured Israel through Ezekiel. *I take no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but rather that the wicked turn from his way and live - when the wicked turn from darkness to light.* The previous verse said God wants *none to perish but for all to come to repentance.* If this is what God wants, when does He want it to happen? This was written thousands of years ago. When will we see evidence of God’s love coming into focus for the sinners of the world? If God is precise with His timing, why is it taking so long?

If God does in fact love sinners so much, He sure seems to be losing the conversion battle! Is He really losing? One of the great challenges we have in understanding God’s plan is the limited perspective that we can view it from. Think about it - here we are living in this age of technology where everything comes to us at the push of a button in a lightning fast manner, and here God is seemingly slogging along through thousands of years to get His plan to work. Let’s rethink this! What “seems to be” and “what is” are often two different things.

**Why the Bible is confusing:** The Bible does not plainly reveal God’s plan and who benefits from it - instead it seems to tell a lot of failure stories and remind us of God’s wrath.



**What we feel like we want:** Just tell us the details! Are we in, are we out, does what I believe matter or not?!?

**Why God arranged it to be this way:** God’s plan does include the conversion of the world BUT FIRST IT REQUIRES the human race be left to their own devices to plainly learn how they would fare without God.

**How do we know that the last 2,000 years of history was not for the purpose of converting the world to Christianity, and if that is true, then what has been the purpose?**

Reason #1. We do not believe the Lord has been trying to convert the world for the past 2,000 years BECAUSE THE WORLD IS NOT CONVERTED.

**Let’s go back to some of the context of our theme text:** Isaiah 55:9-11: If God’s word was meant to convert the world, it would be done! God never *tries* to do something; He does it. Some might look at this reason and say it is simply a reason of convenience, so let’s examine a few more reasons why we know God is not trying to convert the world right now:

Reason #2. We do not believe the Lord has been trying to convert the world for the past 2,000 years BECAUSE THE BIBLE PLAINLY TELLS US SO.

**Jesus explains that there is presently a DOUBLE STANDARD in place regarding understanding:** Matthew 13:10-12: *Whoever has, to him more shall be given, and he will have an abundance; but whoever does not have, even what he has shall be taken away from him* - Jesus starts out talking about a double standard. **He next explains the reason for that double standard - God’s sure word of prophecy by quoting from the Old Testament:** Matthew 13:13-16: The words of Jesus would for the most part fall on deaf ears. Jesus realized that and did not try to change it. He spoke in parables to make it even harder! We can begin to see the logic of God’s plan: His timing is impeccable; His word accomplishes what it is sent to do and when it is supposed to be done, and *He works in systematic stages*.

When do we find out about the stage where God pays attention to those who seem to be left out? Again, we need to be aware of our own puny perspective regarding the enormous and eternal plan of God. To us things may seem unfair and it may seem as though God has even lost interest, but neither is true. The fairness of God can only be understood in the context of the comprehensiveness of God and that has yet to be uncovered.

Regardless of how people think of the Scriptures, it does not change who God is. Our challenge is to present the character of God through the writings inspired by Him for the purpose of giving us the understanding of His plan. How come He did not make it plain? He could have just sent an email to everyone opening it at the same time. They would all read it in their own language (because God can do that!) and it would be so much easier. It would, but He has a bigger reason and purpose.

With our little perspective should come a large dose of humility. After all, we are trying to understand an eternal plan by the eternal God and He is actually letting some grasp it! **The humility we should have for this study:** 1 Corinthians 1:26-29: If you give this incredible knowledge of the eternal plan of God to those who have the great egos of this world, what would they do with it? Probably sell it. Probably put themselves in a position to be lauded by many. Unfortunately we see this within Christianity today. There are those who reap millions of personal dollars from preaching their interpretation of the Gospel. There is no humility there. God has chosen the base things of this world so you do not get all puffed up, thinking you are so smart.

**Why the Bible is confusing:** God works in long, drawn out stages with long, drawn out purposes!

**What we feel like we want:** We impatiently want it all to be equal, understandable and applicable now!

**Why God arranged it to be this way:** Eternity is forever and God’s plan comes with an “eternity guarantee” that promises the righteousness that comes from it will never fail. Let the artist finish his masterpiece!

Reason #3. We do not believe the Lord has been trying to convert the world for the past 2,000 years BECAUSE THE BIBLE POINTS TO AN AGE STILL FUTURE FOR THIS PURPOSE.



Back to a broader look at the context of the Isaiah text we just talked about: **First is the portion that we would typically quote - that Jesus himself first answered and then quoted: Isaiah 6:8: (NASB) <sup>8</sup>Then I heard the voice of the Lord, saying, whom shall I send, and who will go for Us? Then I said, here am I. Send me! Isaiah was answering God’s call to teach the people. Prophetically, this spoke of Jesus. How do we know? Because Jesus quoted the exact words that come next that God instructed Isaiah to say. Jesus said these words as his own reason for doing what he did. Isaiah 6:9-10**

Here again is Jesus quoting this passage in Isaiah: Matthew 13:13-16: Jesus stopped at this point and did not read further. His point made was, “I am teaching so they cannot understand.”

**When is finally time for them to understand? We just have to read the next verse in Isaiah’s prophecy for the answer - the part Jesus did NOT quote! Isaiah 6:11: (NASB) <sup>11</sup>Then I said, Lord, how long? And he answered, until cities are devastated and without inhabitant, houses are without people and the land is utterly desolate...**

Jesus in Matthew 24 described a time of trouble *such as there never was since there was a nation*. God is not trying to convert the world now. How do we know? By the words of Isaiah that Jesus himself quoted. Isaiah went on to ask God how long until the people would no longer be in the dark. The answer given was, “Until the time of trouble when everything has fallen apart.” In other words, this age would be brought to a close by a great time of trouble and distress, and until then there would be many who would hear and see things without being able to grasp their significance. The age for earth’s conversion is coming, but it has not come yet.

**God’s plan allows the masses to be in ignorance until that ignorance brings extreme hardship: Zephaniah 3:8-9: This sounds again like a time of great trouble...but keep reading! The hardship part always gets the most attention, but look at what follows for those same people: <sup>9</sup>For then I will give to the peoples purified lips, that all of them may call on the name of the LORD, to serve Him shoulder to shoulder. All the earth will be devoured - some people think this means the literal earth will be burned up, but we know from Ecclesiastes 1:4 that *the earth abideth forever*. This passage is symbolic, showing that the social order of things will be destroyed. The people could not be given *purified lips* if they are all destroyed. On the other end of all the destructive and scary trouble is a beautiful promise of *purified lips* and the people *working shoulder to shoulder*. Great trouble everywhere is listed as one of the things that is to precede the great blessing and world-wide conversion.**

It is always important to realize that prophecy can be and often is misunderstood. Having said that, we need to look for other clues that will help our understanding of prophecy either to ring truer or be proven potentially faulty. Fortunately, we have several other scriptural statements that help! Do we look honestly for clues in prophecy even if our view is proven faulty?

Why the Bible is confusing: Prophecy can be whatever we want it to be and other biblical teachings can be twisted as well. Who knows how to REALLY interpret this book?

What we feel like we want: Just speak in easy language and give me plain simple and clear teaching!

Why God arranged it to be this way: Because the unfolding and revealing of God’s plan is in timed and sequential steps, the understanding of His plan must work the same way. All WILL have their turn!

Reason #4. We understand this age is not for the conversion of the world BECAUSE OF MANY OF THE STATEMENTS MADE BY OUR LORD JESUS AND HIS INSPIRED APOSTLES.

A few of those other scriptural statements that verify the prophecies which point to everyone having a *future* opportunity: **First, another example of Jesus avoiding bringing the Gospel to Gentiles: Matthew 10:5-6: The search was being narrowed for who was to hear the Gospel. Why? It was not yet time for the rest to hear. Now an example of Jesus showing an actual ray of hope for those billions who never heard any part of the Gospel: Matthew 11:20-24: The plan of God is big and inclusive, but it takes time to do it God’s way in God’s time. Tyre and Sidon were cities that existed at the time of Jesus but also existed in the time of the**



prophets of the Old Testament. Back then they were spoken of as dark and evil places. They had that reputation still in Jesus’ day. These were generations of people who lived in utter darkness. *For if the miracles had occurred in Tyre and Sidon which occurred in you, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes - they would have been receptive. If now was the time for world conversion and those cities were still in existence and Jesus KNEW that they would and could repent, then WHY DID JESUS NOT GO TO THEM?*

**Next Jesus shows how ALL will have opportunity, though it will be harder for some than for others:** <sup>22</sup>*Nevertheless I say to you, it will be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon in the day of judgment than for you. Even the people in those evil cities will be resurrected in the Day of Judgment.* <sup>23</sup>*And you, Capernaum, will not be exalted to heaven, will you? You will descend to Hades; for if the miracles had occurred in Sodom which occurred in you, it would have remained to this day.* <sup>24</sup>*Nevertheless I say to you that it will be more tolerable for the land of Sodom in the day of judgment, than for you.* Jesus again showed hope for BOTH cities here - not a lack of accountability, but hope.

**John verifies Jesus’ role as including all men:** 1 John 2:1-2: God’s method was not to keep the Bible itself hidden from all but those who would be given understanding; rather, it was to hide the truth of the matter in plain sight - He hides it with such obscure language that only a certain group of people are able to appreciate these things. Why? Because God’s timing said, “Not yet!” If the world is not being converted in our time, then what is God’s plan accomplishing right now? This question really does get to the core of the matter. We have been emphatic in our approach that God works steadily and progressively over time and we have also been emphatic that Jesus did not set out to immediately convert the world, but did pay the price to save the world. How do all of these pieces add up? From the small, little perspective of humanity here at the end of this age, everything comes to us with instantaneous satisfaction. The Bible was written over a long period of time and shows us ancient thinking, prophecy and history to tell us the story of God’s plan. It just begins to tell the stories. The miracles performed were pictures of future blessings. Using proper principles, studying the Bible allows us to unfold incredible treasures.

**Why the Bible is confusing:** The Bible applies different sets of rules to different time periods. How am I supposed to know what applies when, when it doesn’t tell me?

**What we feel like we want:** God, just send me a direct message that tells me what to do!

**Why God arranged it to be this way:** God’s eternal plan not only sets the human pathway to life, His plan requires some to be active as His people in carrying it out. He calls and develops these people in His own time.

**The true followers of Jesus see things differently than others who may name the name of Christ:** Matthew 13:44: They do not merely hear and appreciate the call, they sell all for its sake, for it is a treasure. They dedicate their lives to the call. This means everything else is secondary.

**The rejection of Jesus by the masses and all he truly stood for draws his true followers to him:** 1 Peter 2:4-12: This is a big hint of what this time is supposed to be for, if not for the conversion of the world. Now is for the true followers of Christ to follow him! Just like he was rejected by men and his choice was precious in the sight of God, *you also, as living stones, are being built up as a spiritual house, to be formed into something bigger than just you, as a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.* You are being called and developed now for very specific reasons.

**Please see the Full Edition CQ Rewind for the rest of this discussion! We still have not dealt with how this massive change for the world will take place. Listen for more on our October 2, 2017 episode, “Why Didn’t God Make the Bible Easy to Understand? (Part II).”**

This is a complex subject but is exciting! God does have a plan and it unfolds step-by-step. Let us follow the steps and glorify God in the process.

***So, why didn’t God make the Bible easy to understand?  
For Jonathan and Rick and Christian Questions...  
Think about it...!***